

Message Text

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ACTION AF-07

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2011

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 14027

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT ET

SUBJECT: YESTERDAY'S EXECUTIONS AND TODAY'S PRECEPTIONS

REFS: ADDIS 13968 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY.

THIS MESSAGE SKETCHES SOME OF THE INITIAL OBSERVABLE REACTIONS IN ADDIS ABABA TO THE EXECUTION OF 60 POLITICAL PRISONERS DURING THE NIGHT OF NOVEMBER 23-24. PREDICTABLE, THESE REACTIONS ARE A MIX OF INDIFFERENCE AND CONCERN, DEPENDING UPON ONES AGE, ORIGINS, RELATIONSHIP TO THE VICTIMS AND POLITICAL ATTITUDES. END SUMMARY.

1. ADDIS, MORNING NOVEMBER 25, CONTINUES TO BE QUIET. THERE ARE FREQUENT MILITARY PATROLS AND, JUDGING BY THE NUMBER OF CARS IN
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FRONT OF THE RESIDENCES OF SOME OF THOSE EXECUTED, PEOPLE ARE

PAYING CONDOLENCE CALLS ON THE MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILIES. IN OTHER PARTS OF TOWN TENTS HAVE BEEN ERECTED AND WOMEN IN BLACK SASHES ARE GOING IN AND OUT, SUGGESTING THAT IN ABSENTIA FUNERALS ARE BEING CONDUCTED BY THE FAITHFUL.

2. THERE IS A WIDESPREAD EXPECTATION THAT FURTHER EXECUTIONS ARE IMMINENT OR MAY ALREADY HAVE OCCURED. THIS EXPECTATION AMONG ETHIOPIANS IS BASED NOT ONLY ON RUMORS OF A SECOND LIST OF THE CONDEMNED BUT ON THE EXPECTATION THAT THE FORCES WHICH HAVE IMPELLED THE CONDEMNATION OF THE FIRST 60 WILL CONTINUE TO REQUIRE THE DEATH OF OTHERS. IT IS ALSO FUELED, OF COURSE, BY THE PMAC'S STATEMENT, AGAIN REPEATED ON READIO ETHIOPIA'S NEWSCASTS NOVEMBER 24, THAT OTHER DETAINEES ARE TO BE SUBJECTED TO COURT-MARTIAL PROCEEDINGS FORTHWITH. FOR THE SAME REASON, FURTHER ARRESTS ARE WIDELY ANTICIPATED AND MAY BE IN COURSE ALREADY.

3. MEMBERS OF THE FAMILIES OF SOME OF THOSE EXECUTED DURING THE NIGHT OF NOVEMBER 23-24 ASCRIBE THE EXECUTIONS EITHER TO THE RISE OF RADICALISM WITHIN THE PMAC OR TO AN UPWELLING OF FEAR ASSOCIATED WITH PMAC'S FACTIONALISM AND THE STRESSES BETWEEN IT AND AMAN'S SUPPORTERS IN SOME OF THE ARMED FORCES' MAJOR UNITS.

4. THESE SOURCES, WHICH ARE OF COURSE STRONGLY BIASED, ASSERT THAT THE NOVEMBER 24 MASSACRE CAN ONLY LEAD TO THE FURTHER ISOLATION AND FRAGMENTATION OF THE ADDIS "DIRG." THEY GIVE THE TRADITIONAL REASONS: BLOOD DEBT; NEW ENMITIES; THE POTENTIAL INFLUENCE IN GOJJAM OF THE FAMILIES OF ENDALKACHEW MAKONNEN AND COL. YELEM ZEWD TESSEMA; THE ALLEGED REVULSION OF NORTHERNERS OVER THE MANNER OF AMAN'S PASSING; AND THE GROWING PRECEPTION PERIPHERAL PEOPLES, PARTICULARLY TIGRES AND THE SOUTHERN GALLA, WITH THE DECLINING CAPACITY OF GOVERNMENT AT THE CENTER OF ADDIS ABABA. ALLEGED ELF THREATS OF RETRIBUTION BY THE BOMBING OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS ARE ALSO WIDELY BRUITED ALREADY.

5. NOT EVERYONE IS A VICTIM OR THE RELATIVE OF A VICTIM, HOWEVER, ADDIS URGAN SCENE MOSTLY PRESENTS THE MANY FACES OF THE INDIFFERENT, AND OF THOSE WHO GET SOME SATISFACTION OUT OF THE FACT AHAT "THE FAT CATS FINALLY GOT THEIRS." STUDENTS
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HAVE TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS OF THEIR PLEASURE WITH THE EXECUTIONS. "IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN DONE LONG AGO." "THEY SHOULD HAVE SHOT THE EMPEROR WHILE THEY WERE AT IT." AND OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN HEARD SINGING ARMY SONGS WITH SMILES OF SATISFACTION ON THEIR FACES AS THE NEWS WAS BEING DISCUSSED ON ADDIS BUSES.

6. THE ADDIS POLICE COMMISSIONER TOLD POL COUNSELOR NOVEMBER 24 THAT THE CITY WAS CALM AND HE EXPECTED IT TO REMAIN SO. "THEY

(THE VICTIMS) PAID THE PRICE OF POWER. THAT'S POLITICS." THE COMMISSIONER DID NOT THINK THERE WOULD BE A REACTION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE EITHER. "THEY ARE INDIFFERENT TO WHAT GOES ON IN ADDIS ABABA." "THEY (THE VICTIMS) HAD NO FRIENDS."

7. THERE ARE OBSERVERS, FINALLY, WHO ASSERT THAT THE "DIRG'S" SHOW OF RESOLUTION AND POWER WILL HAVE BOUGHT IT SOME TIME IN WHICH TO SET ITS HOUSE IN ORDER. THESE PEOPLE ALSO TEND TO FEEL THAT MANY ELEMENTS OF THE EPMG AND OF THE MILITARY WILL FEEL RELIEF THAT THE TRIALS, WITH THEIR ATTEMPTANT PUBLICITY, ARGUMENT OVER EVIDENCE, PROCEDURAL COMPLEXITIES AND OBSCURITIES OF LAW HAVE BEEN AVOIDED FOR THOSE HELD MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISASTER OF THE WOLLO DROUGHT - AND THIS MAY WELL BE SO.
WYMAN

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